(b) whether it is also a fact that average cereal yield in 2005 was only 2,000 kg. per hectare in India as compared to over 6,000 kg. in the US and 5,000 kg.in China; and

(c) if so, the steps Government proposes to take to boost the agricultural productivity?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) As per information available at Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) internet site 'http://faostat.fao.org' the arable land of India in 2005 was 159.65 million hectare as against 174.45 million hectare in USA. The average yield of cereals in 2005 in China, Thailand, Brazil and USA was 5229 Kg./hectare, 3012 Kg/hectare, 2883 Kg./Hectare and 6373 Kg./hectare respectively as against India's average yield of 2451 Kg./hectare.

(c) Several programmes have been taken up to boost agricultural productivity. These include, Macro Management of Agriculture providing flexibility to the States to take up suitable projects and setting up of National Rainfed areas Authority. In addition, the National Food Security Mission has been taken up to increase foodgrains production by 20 million tonnes by the end of the Eleventh Plan. Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana has also been launched to incentivise the States to invest more in agriculture sector.

Area sown under oilseed in kharif season

793. SHRI D. RAJA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is fact that the area sown under kharif oilseed crop for the new season is 16.47 million hectares as against 14.88 hectares in the previous year;

(b) if so, what are the prime reasons for this expanded area under oilseed cultivation in the current season;

(c) what will be the expected production of oilseed this year; and

(d) whether Government hopes to create self-sufficiency in oil seed by 2009-10; and the details of the steps proposed by Government to increase oilseed production on a sustained basis?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) As per the 2nd Advance Estimates, the area sown under Kharif oilseed crops is estimated at 17.71 million hectares during 2007-08 as against 16.77 lakh hectares in the previous year. The area coverage during 2007-08 increased because of favourable weather conditions at the time of sowing.

(c) During 2007-08, the production of oilseeds is estimated at 27.16 millions tonnes (2nd Advance Estimates released on 7th February, 2008) comprising 17.57 million tonnes in Kharif season and 9.59 million tonnes in Rabi season.

(d) The demand-supply in oilseeds is met through the import of edible oils. To increase the production of oilseeds and make the country self-sufficient, the Government is implementing a Centrally sponsored "Integrated Schemes of Oilseeds, Pulses, Oil Palm and Maize (ISOPOM)" in 14 major oilseeds growing States in the country. Under the Scheme, financial assistance is provided for purchase of breeder seeds, production of foundation and certified seeds, distribution of seed minikits, distribution of plant protection chemicals and equipments, weedicides, distribution of sprinkler sets, water carrying pipes and training to encourage fanners to grow these crops.

Recommendations of CACP for MSP

794. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has received any recommendations from the CACP to increase the Minimum Support Price of paddy, sugarcane, cotton and groundnut;

(b) if so, whether the said recommendations have been accepted by Government;

(c) by when the same are likely to be implemented;

(d) if not, the reasons for non-acceptance of the recommendations;

(e) whether Government has to bear any additional burden for the purpose; and

(0 if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) to (f) The Commission for Agriculture Costs and Prices (CACP) has submitted its Report on Price Policy for Kharif Crops and Sugarcane of 2008-09 season to the Government. Final decision regarding the Minimum Support Prices (MSPs) for the Kharif crops and Statutory Minimum Price (SMP) of sugarcane of 2008-09 season will be taken by the Government after obtaining the views of State Governments/UTs and Central Ministries as well as such other relevant factors which are considered important for fixation of support prices. The financial implications of any decision regarding MSP will be worked out by the Department of Food and Public Distribution under whom Food Corporation of India (FCI) functions.

Suicides of farmers in Uttar Pradesh

795. SHRIMATI JAYA BACHCHAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there are reports of drought in some parts of Uttar Pradesh with farmers committing suicide;

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard;

(c) whether it is a fact that relief provided so far is meager and has not ameliorated the conditions of farmers there;

(d) the steps Government is contemplating to provide further relief particularly in areas like Bundelkhand; and

(e) whether there are any plans to introduce crop insurance in such areas?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) tad (b) This year, the Government of Uttar Pradesh have reported drought in parts of the State. However, no report on suicides by farmers in the context of drought has been received from the State Government.

(c) It is primarily the responsibility of the State Government to take necessary measures in the wake of natural Calamities including drought. There is ready availability of funds with the State Government in the Calamity Relief Fund (CRF) for taking such measures. No Memorandum has so far been received from the State Government for assistance from the National Calamity Contingency Fund (NCCF) etc. for the current drought.